

**Proposed Oversight Actions of the Science Panel to Support the Program for Coordinated and Integrated Ecosystem Monitoring and Assessment in Puget Sound**

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**Proposed Actions:**

- Briefing, discussion and decision on some actions of the Science Panel needed to support the development of the program for coordinated and integrated ecosystem monitoring and assessment in Puget Sound (Monitoring Program).

**Summary**

According to the Biennial Science Work Plan and the Strategic Science Plan, the Science Panel oversees the Monitoring Program. We would like to work together with the Science Panel to better define what is meant by “oversight”. We expect that, over time, the Science Panel will develop and refine its relationship and role relative to the Monitoring Program Steering Committee. As a start, we propose that the Science Panel provide advice on early products to support the development of the Monitoring Program. We will ask the Science Panel to decide to review the first products of the Monitoring Program, which we will develop once the Steering Committee is formed. We will also inform the Science Panel of our meeting with the chairs of the PSP boards about the process of forming a Steering Committee.

**Background on the Steering Committee**

In May 2009, the Leadership Council approved establishing a Steering Committee to ensure stakeholder engagement in the program for coordinated and integrated ecosystem monitoring and assessment.

The Steering Committee is designed as an advisory body and will play an important role in the development and implementation of the Monitoring Program. The activities of the Steering Committee will change over time as the program develops. In the year, the Steering Committee will act as a “launching committee” to shepherd program development and help with initial operations of the program.

Various efforts (e.g., the Monitoring Consortium Report to the Legislature 2008, a Stakeholder Group meeting convened by PSP staff in July 2009, and the Biennial Science Work Plan) have proposed responsibilities for the Steering Committee.

The responsibilities of the Steering Committee are summarized as:

- a. Direct a program that is responsive to the region's needs in the context of Puget Sound health protection and recovery.
- b. To make recommendations to the Science Panel for assessment questions to be addressed by sustained monitoring and research programs.
- c. Provide strategic direction defined as "high-level advice about how to develop, support and maintain the program".
- d. Lead the coordination of ecosystem monitoring efforts, including engaging decision-makers on statewide and regional data collection and management approaches.
- e. Oversee the Technical Committee's work to integrate and coordinate monitoring and assessment needs across the ecosystem;
- f. Help define and ensure compliance with monitoring program requirements and designs that satisfy Puget Sound Partnership requirements as suggested by the Science Panel and Leadership Council (e.g., standards for credible monitoring and results; subjects that need to be monitored, etc.).
- g. Develop advice to the Partnership and entities invested in ecosystem monitoring regarding monitoring efforts and funds.
- h. Evaluate options for program development through discussions and input from stakeholders.

The initial tasks of the Steering Committee are to:

- Establish name, vision, mission, scope and objectives of the Monitoring Program.
- Develop an operational framework.
- Develop program charter and bylaws.
- Make recommendations to the Science Panel for assessment questions to be addressed by sustained monitoring and research programs (BSWP 3.1.1.2).
- Make recommendations to the Science Panel for criteria that will be used to prioritize the greatest needs for targeted research, effectiveness studies, and status and trends monitoring that should be addressed by sustained, integrated scientific investigations (BSWP 3.1.1.2). The coordinated program will use Science Panel endorsed criteria to address the goals of monitoring, and to develop guidelines accounting for effectiveness studies, geospatial scales needed, and design of data collection (Strategic Science Plan 4.1.3).
- Convene topic-specific technical working groups to implement the guidance from the coordinated monitoring and assessment program steering committee (SSP 4.3.1).
- Articulate and propose roles for the Science Panel, the Science Program and Steering Committee.

## Recommendations

Given the role and tasks of the Steering Committee for developing the Monitoring Program, we have the following recommendations for the Science Panel:

- 1) We recommend that the Science Panel **provide advice on the operational framework** for the Monitoring Program. We will present the framework at the June 2010 meeting.
- 2) We recommend that the Science Panel **endorse criteria** that the Monitoring Program will use as a basis for prioritizing the greatest needs for targeted research, effectiveness studies, and status and trends monitoring. We will ask for the endorsement at the June or August 2010 meeting.

*“And just as the Call to Action has stated, not only are we connected, but we share the same vision. This vision was iterated over and over during this conference by everybody I spoke to and listened to: We want to design a healthy future for the Salish Sea.”*

*Designing a healthy Salish Sea is an exercise in place-based conservation, which has 3 tenants: to know, connect and protect. All of those were espoused this week. To know requires basic science and monitoring. To connect requires the translation and use of that science to inspire the people of the area. To protect requires using the science and the political capital generated by educating people.”*

*Joe Gaydos, Closing Address of Puget Sound/Georgia Basin Conference 2009.*